

alvine (discharges?) and other (the?) secretions, the diet and the medicines taken, &c.: so that, at a glance, the state of every patient on any given day might be referred to, with the medicines prescribed, and their effect. This system, which at first sight might appear somewhat difficult, but which can be worked out with the greatest care, I have found so useful in the treatment of those who were under my care, that I would venture earnestly to recommend it to all who may have the management of the insane." P. E.

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ART. XX.—*Address on Insanity, delivered before the New York State Medical Society, February 5th, 1844.* By SAMUEL WHITE, M. D., President of the Society, and senior Proprietor of the Hudson Lunatic Asylum. pp. 20.

THE late period at which this address was received, prohibits us from giving it that attention which otherwise might have been devoted to it. Its source stamps it with that authority which long experience and an intimate knowledge of the subject alone can give. From a cursory examination, we feel no hesitation in pronouncing it to be one of the very best essays upon insanity, both theoretically and practically, that has ever appeared in this country.

The author is evidently no metaphysician of the German school, no disciple of Guislair and Heinroth, since he asserts that "there is no such thing as a diseased mind without its connection with matter." He believes, with the phrenologists, that the cerebrum "is the organ of the primitive faculties, and the cerebellum of the animal passions." He attempts no definition of insanity; declares that every effort to classify it into "genera, orders and species" must prove abortive; thinks that many mistakes have arisen from treating hallucinations as the *cause* and not the *consequence* of the disease; asserts that he has uniformly found the hallucinations of "religious maniacs" a *consequence* and not a *cause*, and that he "has never yet seen a patient insane from pure, unadulterated religious truth, such as repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ;" and pronounces "Millerism, Mormonism, Swedenborgianism, Mesmerism, Perfectionism, and all other mistakeisms and fanaticisms that can be named" as among the "fruitful sources of distempered imaginations."

"Irritation," says he, "specifically acting upon the brain and nervous system, and sympathetically upon the vascular, may define the phenomena of insanity. The brain and nervous system being primarily excited, increased vascular action is its necessary concomitant. Hence increased pulse, turgescence of blood-vessels and pain in the head, are the ordinary attendants of incipient insanity. With great deference I have here ventured to reverse the order of Dr. Rush, who says 'the cause of madness is seated, *primarily*, in the blood-vessels of the brain.'"

As useful in combating a prevalent error of opinion and practice, we extract the author's remarks upon bleeding.

"Copious abstractions of blood should ever be avoided in insanity, as endangering dementia. Very few are the cases of insanity, even in its incipient stage, that admit of venesection. In such only as are plethoric and in the vigour of life is it admissible at all, and then only in a cautious degree. The pulse is deceptive; though there may be increased impetus of blood in the carotids, yet they will be found compressible, and the radial artery feeble in its action, showing an unequal distribution rather than congestion. In such cases, where symptoms seem urgent, topical blood-letting, by leeching or cupping, may safely be resorted to, without danger of collapse. In the treatment of six hundred cases, venesection has not been resorted to in more than one in a hundred, after they entered the institution, and then only moderate in quantity. Many, however, have been brought to the asylum after two or three copious bleedings, undoubtedly with the best intentions; yet the results have proved a prostration of the vital energies, more difficult to overcome than the original disease."

He disapproves of venesection in puerperal insanity. Active emetics and

drastic purgatives are seldom admissible, but when the digestive organs are disordered, an emeto-cathartic of ipecac. and calomel is recommended, with blue mass and ipecac., three parts to one, to act upon the liver. Mild laxatives and enemata are also useful. Of narcotics "opium, camphor, morphia, stramonium, conium, belladonna and aconite are most to be relied upon. These are often improved by combination with other remedies. For instance, opium, ipecac. and soap, equal parts, forms a pill much easier given than Dover's powder. Camphor mixture, with half a grain of tart. antimony, and five drops of laudanum to the ounce, given in half-ounce doses, is a powerful sedative and adjuvant in allaying nervous excitement. Morphia with colchicum, where there is a gouty or rheumatic diathesis, endangering metastasis, is a valuable auxiliary in treatment. Stramonium acts specifically on the sensorium, stimulating the absorbents. A saturated tincture of the seeds in camphor mixture is the best mode of administering it. Conium is best combined with the different preparations of iron. Belladonna and aconite are often improved by combination."

Counter-irritants are valuable, and warm bathing is highly recommended. "The patient should be immersed from twenty to thirty minutes, the heat at 96° Fahrenheit, refrigerating the head while in the bath, when the heat of the part should indicate the necessity. Warm bathing will be found particularly beneficial and appropriate in melancholia and delirium tremens. Fixed alkaline salts added to the water, are useful in removing the sebaceous oil from the surface of the body. The nitro-muriatic bath is a valuable and effective agent in a congestive state of the liver, and should be repeated in connection with the usual remedies, until we have evidence of a healthy secretion of bile. The value of the shower-bath is known to all, yet it is too indiscriminately used. Should atony prevent a suitable reaction and warmth over the surface, it may do serious and lasting injury."

"In the second stage of insanity a more tonic treatment becomes necessary. The various preparations of iron, mineral acids and quinine, nitrate of silver, followed by a solution of iodine to prevent a discoloration of the skin conjoined with suitable moral treatment, will often decide the future prospects and destiny of the patient."

P. E.

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ART. XXI.—*Report of the Surgeon General U. S. Army*, pp. 10. 8vo, Washington, 1843.

FROM this interesting document, we learn that "the number of cases of indisposition which have been under treatment in the army, during the last twelve months, was 27,734; 26,820 of which occurred within the past year; 914 being cases that remained of the preceding year.

"Of the whole number of sick, 26,513 have been restored to duty, 309 have been discharged from the service, 18 have deserted, and 160 have died; leaving, on the 30th September, 726 still on the sick report.

"The mean strength of the army for the last twelve months has been about 9,863; and as the number of sick, during the same period, was 27,734, and the aggregate of deaths was 160, it will appear that the proportion of cases of indisposition to the number of men in service, was as  $2\frac{1}{10}$  to 1, or 281 per cent.; the ratio of deaths to the number of men, as 1 to 61 $\frac{1}{2}$ , or a fraction less than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; and the proportion of deaths to the number of cases treated, as 1 to 173 $\frac{7}{10}$ , or  $\frac{1}{173\frac{7}{10}}$  per cent."

That the high standard of qualification for admission into the medical department of the army is maintained, is sufficiently attested by the fact, that of twenty-four applicants invited to attend before the medical board for examination, fourteen only ventured to appear, of whom three afterwards withdrew, one was objected to on account of physical disqualification, and of ten actually examined, four only were approved.

The army medical officers, at the various posts, are zealously engaged in